'DOLLAR MARK' TERMED SETBACK TO PRACTICAL EDUCATION

"I call, therefore, a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war."—MILTON.

Theory That Money Alone Will Emancipate From Bondage of Work and Pave Way to Free and Easy Life and Ultimate Happiness Branded as Brutish and Fallacious, and One That Does Not Satisfy.

By CHARLES ALEXANDER RICHMOND,
President of Union College.

NOTHING is more important to a nation than just views of education. The very security of democracy depends upon it. The ruin of Germany was her philosophy of education. Not many men fully understand this. They give different reasons; her inordinate ambition, her national arrogance, her commercial aspirations. But back of all this was her philosophy. When Germany began to teach her children that material power was the one thing needful, and that war was the way to get it, she sealed her doom. When these children grew up under such a training they became what we know they were—men of blood and iron, ruthless, coarse, overbearing, the natural enemies of mankind.

Practical politics was their creed and their education was as practical as their politics. It failed; that is, it proved to be unpractical, and for one reason, because it was based upon the proposition that man lives by bread alone. It is the lie of the ages. Exposed again and again, century after century, but still believed by many, and many would still make it the watchword of education. In a college classroom a few weeks ago the young men were asked why they sought an education. With one accord they answered, in substance: "To make more money."

Here is the motive and spirit of the so-called practical education, at least in its strictest form. Unless we can teach these boys to extend their horizon beyond the rim of a dollar our chances of turning out useful citizens are of the smallest.

We must understand that the distinction between the cultural and practical, as we use the terms, in education is not between Latin and Greek on the one hand and science on the other. As a matter of fact, the leading men of science are keen advocates of a cultural education. We give altogether too much heed to the utterances of certain men who have attained distinction or made great fortunes by inventive genius or by an unusual eye for business and who are of the opinion that this gives them a kind of magisterial authority in matters of education, religion, politics, finance, social order and all other high questions of human concern.

Seek Wisdom of Men Whose Vision of Life Is Broad

When we seek guidance in such matters it is not to such men we should go, but to men of vision whose world is not bounded by a factory fence. There is really very little difference of opinion among men who are recognized as the actual leaders of thought in this country. It is mainly a question of emphasis. The men of the highest authority in engineering and in all branches of science, theoretical or applied, are constantly urging the necessity of more cultural studies in technical courses. If these men could be allowed to define a practical education and to determine it there would not be much ground for controversy. The making of a man would be their aim, not the making of a mechanic.

But that is not what a practical education means to those who are clamoring for it most loudly. They would turn all institutions into glorified trade schools where no subject is taught unless it had a dollar at the further end of it.

This demand does not come always from small men nor from ignorant men, but it must be said that they are for the most part men wanting in imagination and in foresight. Their eyes are fixed upon the immediate and not upon the ultimate.

The underlying theory of it all, held, as I believe, quite unconsciously, is that the possession of money will emancipate from the bondage of work and enable us to live free and easy lives, and that this is the goal of human aspiration and the only happiness we can be sure of.

Easy Lives Without Work Is Not Ideal Existence

It is a brutish and a very fallacious theory, and the proof of it is that it does not satisfy. To make such a theory the foundation of a system of education and to teach our children in the schools and the young men and women in our colleges that this is life is like injecting an insidious kind of poison into them which will slowly corrupt the blood and in the end destroy all the finer impulses and ideals.

It is not the detail of education I am most concerned with, but the spirit behind it. We have thought too much of methods and too little of principles. The clear purpose of the men who established our early institutions of learning was to provide means to develop the higher life of the nation. Commerce was very little in their minds. They trained large numbers of Christian ministers and teachers and missionaries, and when these men went out to make a career their minds were set not upon large salaries, upon fortune, nor even upon fame; success to them was the saving of souls, the moulding into strength and beauty the spirits of men and the elevating, by their life and teaching, of the life of the nation.

We should ask ourselves, especially at such a time as this, whether our institutions of learning—higher and lower—are remaining true to these ideals. Whether with all our millions of endowment we have increased in any proportionate measure in the imperishable riches of the spirit.

It is no question of subjects or of courses, but a question of interpretation of life. A man's life work does not consist in earning his bread even though most of us spend nearly all our time doing it. Freedom from work does not mean freedom from bondage. For most men the time of leisure is the time of bondage, for this is the time when a man's vices have a chance to fasten their chains upon him. To teach a man how to use his leisure is one of the highest purposes of education.

A man's life work consists in contributing to the sum of human good; in realizing himself as an immortal soul; in emancipating his spirit and developing himself into the divine likeness, and he can do this in any condition of life as has been proved again and again by the nobler ones among us. It is no accident that the saints of the earth have been among the poor.

It is the business of education to help man in this enterprise. The very first step in educating a child should be to make him realize that he is a child of God; that his life and his hope and his destiny are not to be thought of in terms of matter but of spirit, and all through the process he should be led to feel that his education is directed toward making him independent—independent of the tyranny of things, independent of fortune and of fate—the master of himself and of his passions and powers. If education does not teach a boy to depend less upon things it has failed of its highest purpose.

Such a result will not be brought about by telling him that his education is to sharpen his wits so that he can get more than his share of the good things going. And it will not be accomplished by teaching him to judge success upon a cash basis and to estimate men in the professions in proportion to their salary. Such a policy is more likely to produce a generation of needle eyed, acquisitive men who will no doubt gain a great deal, but who in the process will lose about all that is worth having—among other things their souls.

This is the road along which certain of our leaders in education are seeking to lead us. I do not believe the great body of teachers are so shallow as to be deceived by them. A school or a college is neither a rolling mill nor a 10 cent store. The purposes, the ambitions and the standards are altogether different. Minds are not merchandise and sales and profits are not in our program. The real values in education are the things money cannot buy. They cannot be turned into money. But they are the things that make education worth while; without them man himself would not be worth educating.

In the account of the victory of the Roman General, Galerius, over the Persian King, Narses, in the year 298, a story is told by Ammianus, a Greek historian of the fourth century, which, as Gibbon observes, praves the rustic but martial ignorance of the legions. A bag of shining leather filled with pearls fell into the hands of a private soldier. He carefully preserved the bag, but he threw away the pearls, judging that whatever was of no use could not possibly be of any value. There is a lesson in this incident for the utilitarian in education. Obvious and material use is to him the standard of value, and very often, judging that whatever is of no use cannot possibly be of any value, he keeps the bag and throws away the pearls.

Of course every age has its own excellences as well as its own peculiar defects, but, however optimistically modern we may be, we cannot claim for our American civilization any large share of the cultural spirit which some of us are old fashioned enough to believe is the true practical education. We are wanting in repose, in breadth of judgment, in the principle of restraint, in a sense of proportion. We are restless and lawless and disproportioned. We have jazz music, jazz art, jazz literature, jazz amusements, jazz conduct, not to mention jazz education and jazz finance. I can think of nothing more needed in this present age than an infusion of what we may call the classical spirit.

Cultural Spirit Is Basis Of Practical Education

We cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that certain of our leaders in education are to an extent responsible for a situation which we all deplore. Their attack upon the study of the classics and their ridicule of all cultural learning has produced not only a reaction against the study of the classics, but also a decline of the humanistic spirit, a loss which we shall find it very difficult to repair. Perhaps they did not mean to do this, but this is what they have done.

All this has been carried on under the catchward of efficiency—a horrible word and nine times out of ten a horrible thing. But these so-called practical men in education have turned out in the long run to be highly unpractical, and in more than one instance great universities have been obliged to retrace their steps and to undo the mischief which these men have done, repeating once again the experience so common among us mortals of mistaking the shadow for the substance.

We are beginning to realize the mistake. The signs are hopeful. We are all agreed that the security of our democracy depends upon education. Moreover, we are coming to understand that a democratic education is one that unites men and not one that divides them into classes. The most hopeful sign of all is that the workingman is beginning to demand a larger share not merely of the vocational training which fits him for a trade but of that higher culture which admits him to his spiritual inheritance.

We shall all come at last to see that the strength of a democracy is in the idealist and not in the utilitarian alone. We shall realize also that the practical education for a democracy is an education that ripens the judgment for the exercise of good citizenship and opens the minds of men for that better understanding of each other through which alone industrial and social peace can be secured. The fruits of such an education are evident to any one who will take the trouble to inquire.

I suppose that not more than one-half of one per cent. of our 110,000,000 have had the advantage of a broad cultural education, but in that small minority will be found a majority of the men to whom we intrust our most serious affairs in government, in journalism, in economics, in the law, in religion and in education. They are our leaders in public life and the molders of public opinion. All four of our representatives at the recent Washington conference are men who were trained after this manner. The type exemplified by such men is one of the most powerful as well as one of the most wholesome influences we possess. Men of this kind do more and can do more to civilize this progressive and vigorous but still half civilized nation than all the promoters and efficiency men.

I say this because these are the men who represent at their highest and strongest the interests and forces of the mind and spirit. And civilization is not a product of economics but an achievement of the spirit. The thing this country needs the most is the very thing men of this character are qualified to supply. Education is not passive but active. A college is not an intellectual refrigerating plant for the preservation of perishable academic goods. It is a power house of intellectual and spiritual energy. Its mission is not to turn out mere technicians. The business of a college is to take unformed youths and develop them into men of character and judgment. Our success in this is the measure of our patriotic service.

An Exponent of Culture

CHARLES ALEXANDER RICHMOND.

MID-WEST LITERATI

By REX HUNTER.

IT was the summer of 1918. I was on the staff of the Chicago *Daily News*, helping to get out the early edition and writing a daily "feature story." As I sat one day before a typewriter the door of the local room opened and a young man walked in. He was conventionally handsome, with regular features and a trim black mustache. His felt hat was cocked slightly to one side, giving him a jaunty air. He walked slowly down the local room, surveying with cool satiric eyes the huddled desks and the reporters who sat at them. Like a cat, I thought, a Maltese cat. His eyes were the color of a Maltese cat's fur. "Who is that chap?" I asked of the reporter at the adjoining typewriter. "Oh," replied the reporter, glancing up, "that's Ben Hecht. He added, "He's accounted the best feature writer in these parts."

Hecht had just returned from covering the Lusk trial. After I had met him and we had talked for a few minutes he took me over to a man with gray hair and steady gray eyes behind steel rimmed spectacles, introducing him as "Mr. Sandburg." I was pretty sure that this was the author of "Chicago Poems," which had made a great impression on me, but I felt my way until I had made sure. Hecht in introducing me mentioned that I was born in New Zealand, and Sandburg, his gray eyes laughing, said: "I never hear of any part of the Antipodes without thinking of a geography book we had at school which set forth that Tasmania had the most salubrious climate in the world." He repeated the phrase "most salubrious climate" several times, rolling it around his tongue, wagging his head and grinning.

Hecht and Sandburg were a satisfying contrast. Carl would sit chewing on an unlit stogie, while the cream of the elevated eddied through the dingy windows. The "Swedish nightingale" spent his days like any drab sparrow, doggedly grinding out "labor stuff" and reviewing movies. Hecht, on the other hand, took a certain pride in tossing off with ease feature stories far better than those over which his fellows sweated. He had a marked facility for drinking up the picturesque features of a thing in a few quick glances. One day Lillian Gish came to Chicago. The war was in full blast then and it was alleged that she had come from the front line trenches. The newspaper men formed a solid phalanx on the platform of the railway station; that is, all but Hecht, who hovered in his customary way on the outskirts. When the motion picture queen alighted the reporters surrounded her. Hecht heard one of them ask the question, "Were you actually in the front line trenches, Miss Gish?" and her answer, "No, I was only near them." That was enough for the facile Ben. Jumping into a taxi he returned to the *News* office and on the strength of this answer and his memories of La Gish he wrote a diverting story, which appeared in the "home," or most important, edition of the day. The other reporters came out with dull stories in late editions.

Carl Sandburg always contended that the only folk songs America possessed were such street ballads as "Frankie and Johnny." At a lecture recital in Chicago one Sunday afternoon he amazed an audience of gilded girls and dowagers by coming out with a banjo slung around his neck and singing several verses of this particular ballad. I was talking to him one day about a one act play by a middle Western playwright which had been given to me to read in manuscript. "What's the setting?" inquired Carl. "Well," I began, "it's an ancient garden with a sort of Maeterlinckian atmosphere——" "Why doesn't one of these fellows do a play about Jesse James instead of dishing up diluted Maeterlinck?" Carl burst out. When I showed him some of the work of one of the first Australian poets he observed, "Those fellows couldn't get away from the English skylark." One of Carl's poems, "Drum Notes," is addressed to "Danny." "Who's Danny, Carl?" I asked. "Danny," he said slowly, "is an Irish setter who comes along with me sometimes when I go hiking or fishing."

While Sandburg was full of pity for struggling humanity, Hecht regarded it with contempt. He was a diverting talker, discussing his newspaper experiences in a contemptuous monotone. At the period of which I write he was known outside the newspaper world only as a contributor of mordant studies to the *Little Review*. Since then he has caused a flutter with "Erik Dorn," which is just the kind of novel I would have expected him to do; 400 odd pages of hard, clever, patterned prose with the hollow blaze of lightning.

Edgar Lee Masters I first saw in a Chicago court practicing his profession of law. He was engaged in a divorce action and he and his opponent snarled at each other until the Judge broke in with a protesting "Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" Thereafter I not infrequently observed him solemnly promenading his Beethoven-like brow along Michigan avenue. I also recall him debating with Stanislaw Szukalski, the Polish sculptor, in Kroch's book store, and one afternoon I passed him strolling along Dearborn street with Carl Sandburg.

Held Back by Ignorance and Traditions, China, Despite Industrial Opportunities, Is Still in Dark Ages of World's Progress

By RICHARD T. MONCURE.
Special Correspondence of THE NEW YORK HERALD.

SHANGHAI, April 17.

WITH the political conditions prevailing at present in open war between the factions who seek to govern China the foreigners have all been warned not to penetrate the interior, but stay close to their compounds under the protection of legations or of battleships. It was inevitable that bloodshed would come sooner or later, since China has seethed under the changes from a vast sleepy old time Eastern country into the frontier for foreign speculation. The recent conference at Washington showed her to be the crux of the Far Eastern question; since Hay, Knox, Taft and Roosevelt have long pointed out that whoever understands China, politically and economically, holds the key to the commerce of the Orient.

No nation has the universal respect of the intelligent Chinese to the extent of the American. This is due to the policy of John Hay and Secretary Knox as to the "open door," as well as to the fact that the Chinese appreciate that America *may wish* her trade, but casts *no covetous eyes on her terrain*. The world's war has not blunted the aggressive sensibilities, however, of other grasping nations, who are in China *solely* for their own ends. That China is to-day prostrate financially is due to her long suffering spoliation by other countries controlling her ports, customs and railroads and post offices, thereby deflecting Chinese revenue from her lawful claimants.

America has recognized the need of sending a different type of consul to Chinese ports since Great Britain, France, and more recently Germany, had such astute traders and politicians at their posts of enterprise that they became powers in influence for the materialistic advancement of their respective Governments. While our consular service may not yet be perfect, the United States has, however, awakened to this responsibility. American consuls gather information for the Department of State, hence the need to have real Americans on the job, since the custom had prevailed of employing often foreign born consuls, who understood the language. Young men now, instead of old politicians, are sent to these posts, since their work materially dovetails with both the Department of Labor and Commerce, due to our trade expansion and the United States recent Shipping Board policy as well as for the private benefit of exporters.

For a Long Time Now, China Has Sent Youth Here

China has long been sending her young men to the west, to train for political service in the Orient; hence the Chinese people realize the important need of a different script for their country, since their former method of writing, like their money system, is most baffling to trade and commercialism. Their adoption of phonetic reading leads to the introduction of type and typewriters; and this will also lead to the unification of the language. It is the most radical as well as the most progressive step yet taken by the young republic and will herald a revival of practical learning that will be what the Reformation was to the Dark Ages, since it virtually means the establishment of the "printing press" and open sesame to western culture.

The wonderful commercial potentialities of China and her possibilities as an American customer have made of the land of Confucius the *crux* of the Far Eastern problem. The question how to develop China is not as momentous as the question of *how* to prevent her *spoliation* by foreign nations, since unscrupulous politicians are ever busy, and Japan and Russia always on the spot to seize opportunity for personal chance. The war lords of Pekin and the Sun Yat Sen party of Canton are the civil forces at work for political ascendency within.

Lack of Organization Is One of The Sources of Weakness

It is only in the sea coast towns and large cities like Shanghai, Canton, Hankow, Pekin and Tsinanfu that any Chinese special Government exists, for Hong Kong is distinctly British, while cities of thousands of inhabitants in the interior seem to really thrive without *any kind* of municipal authority. Their inhabitants are densely ignorant and satisfied with their mud huts, lack of civilization and sanitation. The student of Chinese conditions must never forget her racial differences her teeming population and vast area. There are 500 inhabitants to every square mile. The children run around perfectly nude their parents often cut off their hands to make them pathetic as professional beggars and smallpox and leprosy always exists among the poor as well as other diseases of the skin; but they are usually most courteous to strangers and kindly disposed, since there has been no outbreak of import against foreigners since the Boxer rebellion.

As in other primitive lands, the favorite political cures are often poison and execution, with the head of the offender placed on a pole for the benefit of the lesson to the public in general. Piracy still exists to a great degree on the Yangtze River, and as this is the main outlet for traffic, especially far in the interior above Hangkow, buccaneers in the opium smuggling trade make conditions unsafe for travel unless protected by the American or British flag.

Pekin has always been spoken of as the "Forbidden City," yet her pink walls have given way to the march of trade, while on her broad streets, so different from other Chinese cities, daily pass the automobile as well as the camel caravan and shaggy Mongolian ponies, bound for the outposts of civilization. Chinese interests have long spread beyond the Great Wall's boundaries into the north, so that Manchuria and Mongolia are looked upon by China now much as the French regard Alsace and Lorraine. The desire of both Russia and Japan to gain ascendency in this territory has ever been resented by China. Naturally Japan looks on this region as the business outlet as well as territorial expansion for her population and commerce.

The result of the Shantung controversy at one time almost caused a boycott of Japanese wares, but the wily Nipponese see that it is far better to trade in Shantung and Mongolia than to contend for empire boundaries, so that, as in southern California, they silently accomplish their purposes in a commercial rather than diplomatic manner. The racial differences between China and Japan make a great distinction in their moral integrity, for the impress of Confucius has made of the Chinaman a gentleman of high ideals, whose word is usually as good as his bond. Certainly Bret Harte did the Mongolian a vast injustice when he says that for "Ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the heathen Chinee is peculiar."

Millions of Pounds of Wool Annually Exported by China

The untold wealth of China in iron and steel are limitless, also her coal mines; but it is not with these subjects that the writer proposes dealing. The fact that Germany is fast cornering many avenues of wealth by the cheap articles like lanterns with which she floods the Chinese market, is a point for America to realize if she will not surrender the field to the Teuton.

One of the chief exports of China is wool, millions of pounds are yearly shipped abroad, though Chinese wool is of a very poor quality. The Chinese do not know scientific methods of breeding and management. The wool industry in Tientsin has recently greatly increased as to exports, though Mongolia and Manchuria are looked upon as the best fields for this industry. Camel's wool is produced in Chinese Turkestan and Mongolia, most of which finds a market in Russia for shawls and sweaters. Japan has surplanted America as the purchaser of all the goats' hair that China exports. Chinese tea also goes mostly to Japan and Russia; since Formosa and Ceylon are the tea producing sources for the United States.

The World War Brought Modern Ideas Even to China

The influence of the world's war has been felt by the humblest Chinese coolies who went to work on the roads in France, for it gave them opportunities of travel that had never before been their privilege. Thousands of coolies were transported direct from Chili (which is in north China and was the region desolated recently by famine) to Tours and Havre, passing through Canada en route. They have brought back to China accounts of their travels that have made the women also eager for opportunities of learning and fine dress. "Pidgin English" is of little use in Pekin, which is still in many respects a Tartar city. Her great wall, her Hall of the Classics and her Temple of Heaven are wonders that impress the tourists.

When one speaks of the effect of the world's war on China one must needs remember that as early as 1664 China knew of gunpwoder as a means of hurling projectiles. When one considers the innovation of the phonetic system of spelling in China one has to smile, since Ching, who was the founder of the Myng dynasty, some 300 years before Confucius, burned all the books, so that China then would cease to "look back" and venerate her past, but might learn to think new thoughts for herself.

In Peking the past confronts the American as nowhere else in China, since no archæologist can fathom the antiquity of these fossil piles of architecture—the great wall running from the sea to the desert, the burial palaces of the Myng dynasty, approached by an avenue guarded by giant stone elephants, camels and mandarins—extending fully a mile in the primeval mystery of silence—then masked behind somber evergreens, one glimpses the tombs of the rulers of this land that was hoary with age before Columbus took ship for the New World. The word "king" means "capital" in Chinese—and "Nanking" meant the South Capital and "Peking" the North Capital, so the traveler is told. Yet in the diplomatic life of Peking to-day there breathes the spirit and customs of modern Europe, where English, Russian and French are mostly spoken and every function is cosmopolitan in the extreme.

Duty Called the Author Into Chinese Remote Places

It has been my business duty to penetrate into the vast rural districts of China, far from the trail of the white man, with seven Chinese native salesmen and my interpreters, kindly fellows who bargain for me and are most loyal and useful.

I felt like Stanley setting forth for darkest Africa, with my army cot, woolen covers, cooking utensils and provisions. Many nights were spent by me in mud huts, with an enrmous surrounding native population that had never before seen a white man. They were, however, kindly and courteous, though densely ignorant, miserably conditioned and extremely provincial, far worse than the most ignorant of Southern negroes.

Shantung is sacred soil, for here Confucius is buried, and in the course of my travels I visited his grave. These mystic hills are sacred to every devotee of Confucianism, which philosophy has ever shaped the ideals of China. Steeped in antiquity seems the spot, and the approach to the tomb of the great philosopher and preacher is guarded by grand old trees that shelter the memory of this man, whose mind still molds Chinese thought.

The grave of Confucius is a mound of earth surmounted with a column and a stone altar of a simplicity that is most striking. The shrubbery is not dense, but the nearby temple is of vast grandeur, with stone columns some thirty feet tall, carved with Oriental characters in flora and dragons, while within this edifice are rare hand carved wooden supports of altars, rich in silken tapestries but bizarre with Chinese splendor.

Tobacco does not rank chief as a Chinese industry in agricultural districts except in a few provinces. The Germans introduced its modern cultivation to some extent, but the product is mostly imported, and the native smoker seems to prefer a mixture of Sumatra and Philippine leaf. Yet everybody smokes, women as well as men. But herba nicotina has always held a most secondary place with the Chinese, whose taste has long been directed rather to opium smoking. The drowsy smell, mingled with other horrible odors, streams out of many huts as one picks his way through the filthy streets of inland hamlets, where dogs, pigs, goats, chickens and children cloy every inch of ground. Yet, despite the poverty, grime and wretched condition of the poor, the eye of the traveler is delighted with the gorgeous scenery of waving rice fields, beautiful white poppies in full bloom, fruit trees bursting into patches of pink color, while along the rivers, like the Yangtze, are sublime mountain backgrounds that would charm an artist.

Quaint old Buddhist monasteries cap many stony cliffs that border the Yellow Sea, and the monks are very friendly to white men, serving meals with genuine hospitality. And yet, go where one may, always the realization remains that it is China, the Orient, the spell of the East ringing in the tinkling bells of the priests—calling one ever to meditate and ponder the endurance that makes the coolies willing to carry their burdens on bamboo poles; that makes one philosophize on the patience of these people, who spend a life time carving an ivory image; where the land has but two classes, the robbers and the robbed.

Modern American Novels Lack Greatness Because Formulas Are Followed

By STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

WHEN will the last great American novel be written? Will it be a masterpiece of the two thousandth century, or does it already repose securely in our libraries, safe from the eyes of the vast majority, while the typewriters of innumerable authors are clicking, the wheels of innumerable presses are turning, the offices of literary editors are being piled high with fiction, and the stalls of bookshops are being overcrowded in the frantic attempt to supply the public with the "latest and best"? For the latest too frequently represents not the greatest but the poorest; a hundred books too frequently contain the substance of one fairly good one, highly attenuated by modern scientific methods, and the voluminous output of watery and unnecessary fiction lends a forceful argument to those who maintain that the novel is in the act of committing suicide.

Novel of To-day Ought to Think of Self-Destruction

To say that the novel is actually taking its own life may be to exaggerate; but certainly there is justification for those who contend that if it is not destroying itself it ought to do so, and so preserve the remaining shreds of its self-respect. For it has been emasculated to the extent of tottering feebly when it should stride vigorously; it has been robbed of its majesty and driving force, and is like a dotard who utters many words but little wisdom. There would perhaps be but slight loss were it to be gagged; indeed, unless its vitality can be restored, it may be not only gagged but permanently silenced, while a new artistic form may take its place. Such, at least, is the conclusion toward which one must be led by even a casual study of the contemporary novel.

For in the majority of books the last page is written plainly into the first. Novelists seem to work according to formulas as definite as that represented by the algebraic equation $x + y = z$. Once having read the opening chapter and discovered the meaning of x, the average reader could finish the volume for himself and supply the missing y and z; and, moreover, the task is simplified by the fact that there are several generally accepted meanings of x, which vary but little from book to book. For example, there is the novel in which x represents a mystery. Here the opening chapter usually finds some one unaccountably murdered, and the reader is required to rush through three hundred pages in breathless suspense, to be rewarded in the end by learning that the victim died of heart failure or was shot by some previously unheard of projectile. Such a book is "The Grey Room," by Eden Phillpotts, wherein a number of persons are successively destroyed without apparent reason, until in conclusion one is supposed to accept the ingenuous but entirely incredible explanation of a poison bed invented several centuries before by the Borgias. "The Mystery Girl," by Carolyn Wells, is another case in point, and here we find three hundred pages devoted to the egregious proposition that a man has stabbed himself to death with an icicle owing to his unhappiness at finding his long lost daughter. Somewhat different in conception, but hardly less meritorious, is Arthur Preston Hankins's "The Heritage of the Hills," the major premise of which is that the hero has made his home on a desolate ranch in the Sierras merely in order to determine whether some wholly mysterious question asked by his deceased father should be answered in the affirmative or in the negative. That the public is expected to make its way through dozens of scores of pages of such balderdash, published by reputable houses and written by more or less reputable authors, does not augur well for the future of the novel.

Closely allied to the mystery story is the detective tale. This also is written according to formula; there is the adroit and experienced detective, of whom Sherlock Holmes is invariably the prototype; there is the motivating crime, represented by the stolen pearls or the kidnaped woman, and there is the unraveling of the mystery, which is invariably slow to take place since the author must fill up pages, but which is inevitable, since the mystery exists only in order to be dispersed. When shall we find the detective story that leaves the problem unsolved even at the end? Such a novel might have elements of originality, but it probably will never be written, since it probably would never sell. As things are at present, however, the reader is spared the necessity of perusing more than the first and last pages of detective stories; the first, to determine who was murdered, and the last to discover how far the author has endeavored to stretch the reader's credulity. The intervening two hundred and ninety-eight pages will be found to be much the same in all novels and the variations of detail may be passed over as unimportant. In Arthur Crabb's "Ghosts," for example, we will find a love story interwoven, and in David Fox's "Ethel Opens the Door" we will come across a band of former criminals engaged in tracing crime; but these individual differences are unimportant and are necessary more in order to avoid plagiarism than to make any impression on the reader's mind.

Still more common than the detective story is that much overworked vehicle, the novel of sentiment, or rather of sentimentality. It might be thought that in this supposedly intelligent era one would cease to read of the lover of a day who disappears and returns to make passionate love after seven years—yet one will find him in F. E. Mills Young's "Imprudence." It might also be imagined that by this time we had dispensed with the prince in disguise who weds the singer "with the finest voice in Europe"—yet he reappears in all his pristine glory in "The Splendid Folly" by Margaret Pedlar. It might even be hoped that we had outlived the chivalrous hero who succors the frail damsel in distress, yet he is resurrected in multitudinous forms in multitudinous novels—for example, in Arthur Chapman's "Mystery Ranch," wherein the conventional "villain" lures the heroine to his lair in the Western mountains for no other apparent cause than to give her the opportunity to be rescued and ultimately married by a bold young admirer.

A Striker at Bedrock With Style of Schoolboy

Even more disheartening in some respects are those novels that attempt to break away from hackneyed and conventional models and to stamp out for themselves a bold pathway of realism and truth. Sherwood Anderson, for instance, has been widely commended for writing books that strike to the bedrock of life, yet he has the style of a schoolboy and proceeds mainly by means of a series of jerky and disjointed sentences; like others of his school he overlooks the wider horizons of the world and turns a microscope upon the pathology of sex; and as a result he depicts conditions in a way that is not even realistic in the truer sense of the term, since he strips life of all its glow and beauty, of the glamor of far sunsets on opalescent oceans, and of "magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn." The sheer glory of life and the impetuousness of youth, the lullabies of mothers and the crooning of babes in the twilight, the appeal of mountain highways luminously curving under moonlit skies, and the splendor and bloom of April meadows and of murmurous summer hills find little place in the contemporary novel, and none at all in the novel that aims at strict realism; yet these are all a part of life, all a part of reality, and the writer who disregards them is like the painter who would depict the evening sky by portraying its blackness, but forgetting to represent the stars.

For the trend of the novel in England as well as in America is toward a microscopic realism, toward an exhaustive analysis of scandals to which the newspapers can devote only a column or two. As a consequence we have a type of fiction which is as decadent as the life it undertakes to portray, and already the atmosphere is vocal with warnings that unless the new tendencies are reversed we are likely to hear the death knell of the novel as a species of literature.